

Fostering a brighter future

The Advanced Test Reactor Critical became a classroom for nine Idaho State University engineering students recently. The day-long interactive visit gave the students the opportunity to talk with the technical experts who operate the facility, observe how the ATRC operates, and how the reactivity of new experiments are measured in the criticality facility before they are inserted into the Advanced Test Reactor.

Martin McDonough, ATR Operations manager, said, I think the students came away with an appreciation for the vast capabilities of the Advanced Test Reactor and a recognition that Idaho National Laboratory offers many opportunities for technically-qualified people.

ATR officials began talking with the ISU Engineering College this past winter about starting a program to increase interaction between the laboratory and nuclear engineering students. The program this year was a one-day event; however, ATR officials would like to see if the program can be expanded in the future.

McDonough said, Bringing students to the laboratory to let them see some of the technical operations we do here and get insight into the nuclear research arena and its opportunities is good for the students and good for the laboratory as a potential employer.

Mary Lou Dunzik-Gougar, an INL liaison with ISU was one of the faculty members who accompanied the group. In a note to McDonough, she wrote, Two grad students, who are required to write a lab report, were given all the data and other information they needed to gain some valuable insight into reactor kinetics. All of the students had time to interact informally with the staff on various nuclear topics nuclear engineering education, jobs/careers in nuclear

Cliff Stanley (plaid shirt) and Tony LaPorta (far right), discuss the upcoming ATRAC operations with ISU students.

All of the staff seemed genuinely glad to have us there and were very good at explaining the concepts, answering questions and keeping us up to speed on what was happening as they followed the test plan

McDonough noted this project can grow to be part of INLs overall goal of partnering and nurturing science and mathematics education.

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ISU students and their professor observe the ATRC reactor from the canal parapet.